

THE REMINISCENCES OF CARL SCHURZ

affection for him. And now, to think that, at the very close of his splendid career in the war for the Union, he should by one inconsiderate act bring upon himself the censure of the government and of the country, was sad indeed. And this one inconsiderate act was so foreign to what had been, and were again to be, his natural tendencies! Here was the same man who, in October, 1863, had written to the Secretary of the Treasury: "By the vicissitudes of war I was again forced into the command of a department. I almost shrink from a command that involves me in civil matters which I do not understand. Politics or the means to influence a civil people are mysteries which I do not comprehend." And in our intercourse of later years he often said to me: "I know nothing of politics, and don't want to have anything to do with politics. I leave all my politics to John,"—his brother, the Senator. And that now, at the supreme moment of the final closing up of the Civil War, when all the people stood on tiptoe to watch and scrutinize every word that was spoken, and every stroke of the pen by those on the theater of great events, he should jump with both feet into politics of the weightiest kind, and in a manner which could not possibly find acceptance with his government and the vast majority of his countrymen—was an almost tragic spectacle.

Of course, his motives were good. He was, whatever may have been said to the contrary, most kindly

disposed toward the
Southern people and wanted to treat them with
the most gen-
erous consideration. Besides, he feared that the
disbanded rebel
armies might form themselves into guerrilla
bands and so
harass the country by an irregular sort of
warfare, very diffi-
cult to suppress, for an indefinite period of time,
and he hoped
that he might induce them quietly to go home and
become
peaceable citizens at once, by treating them very
handsomely*